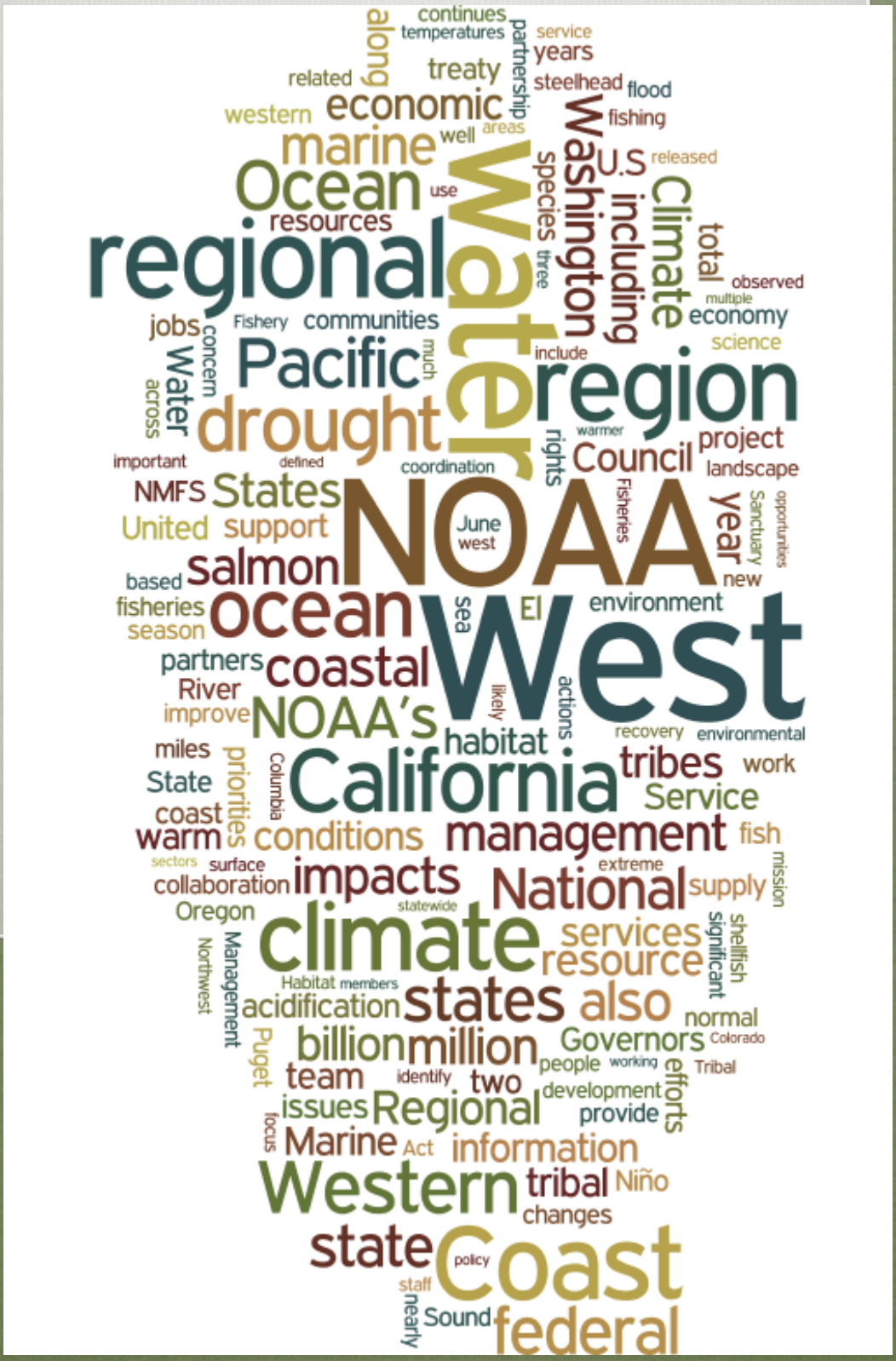
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
WESTERN REGIONAL COLLABORATION TEAM



ANNUAL REPORT

2015

NOAA Vision

Science, Service, Stewardship: Healthy ecosystems, communities, and economies that are resilient in the face of change

NOAA Mission

Science, Service, and Stewardship: To understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts, to share that knowledge and information with others, and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.

Top Priorities 2014-2016

Make Communities more Resilient
Evolve the Weather Service
Invest in Observational Infrastructure
Achieve Organizational Excellence

Regional Collaboration Vision

A unified and regionally integrated NOAA

Regional Collaboration Mission

To identify, communicate and respond to regional needs, catalyze collaboration; and connect people and capabilities to advance NOAA's mission and priorities

---

GOAL: *Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources*

GOAL: *Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action*

GOAL: *Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities*

Core Values

Regional knowledge and **context** matter

Partnerships and **shared responsibility** are foundational

Relationships are based on **mutual trust** and **respect**

Collaboration is essential to successful **leadership**

Innovation and **creativity** are integral to executing NOAA's mission

NOAA West Team Members

Dr. John Stein
Science & Research Director
Northwest Fisheries Science Center
NOAA West Team Lead

Michelle Stokes
Hydrologist-in-Charge
Colorado Basin River Forecast Center
NOAA West Team Lead

Timi Vann
NOAA Western Regional Team Coordinator

Andrea Bair
Climate Services Program
National Weather Service Region Headquarters

Dr. Timothy Brown
Director
Western Regional Climate Center

Dr. Linda Duguay
Director
California Sea Grant

Steve Ignell
Deputy Science & Research Director
Alaska Fisheries Science Center

Kristen Koch
Deputy Science & Research Director
Southwest Fisheries Science Center

Dr. Richard Lataitis
Deputy Director
Earth System Research Lab
Physical Sciences Division

David Lott
West Coast Operations
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Susan McLean
National Centers for Environmental Information

Crescent Moegling
Navigation Manager
Office of Coast Survey

Roger Pierce
Meteorologist-in-Charge
Weather Forecast Office, San Diego

Patrick Rutten
Supervisor
NOAA Restoration Center

Rebecca Smyth
Office for Coastal Management

Jennifer Steger
Supervisor
NOAA Restoration Center

Barry Thom
Deputy Regional Administrator
West Coast Regional Office Fisheries

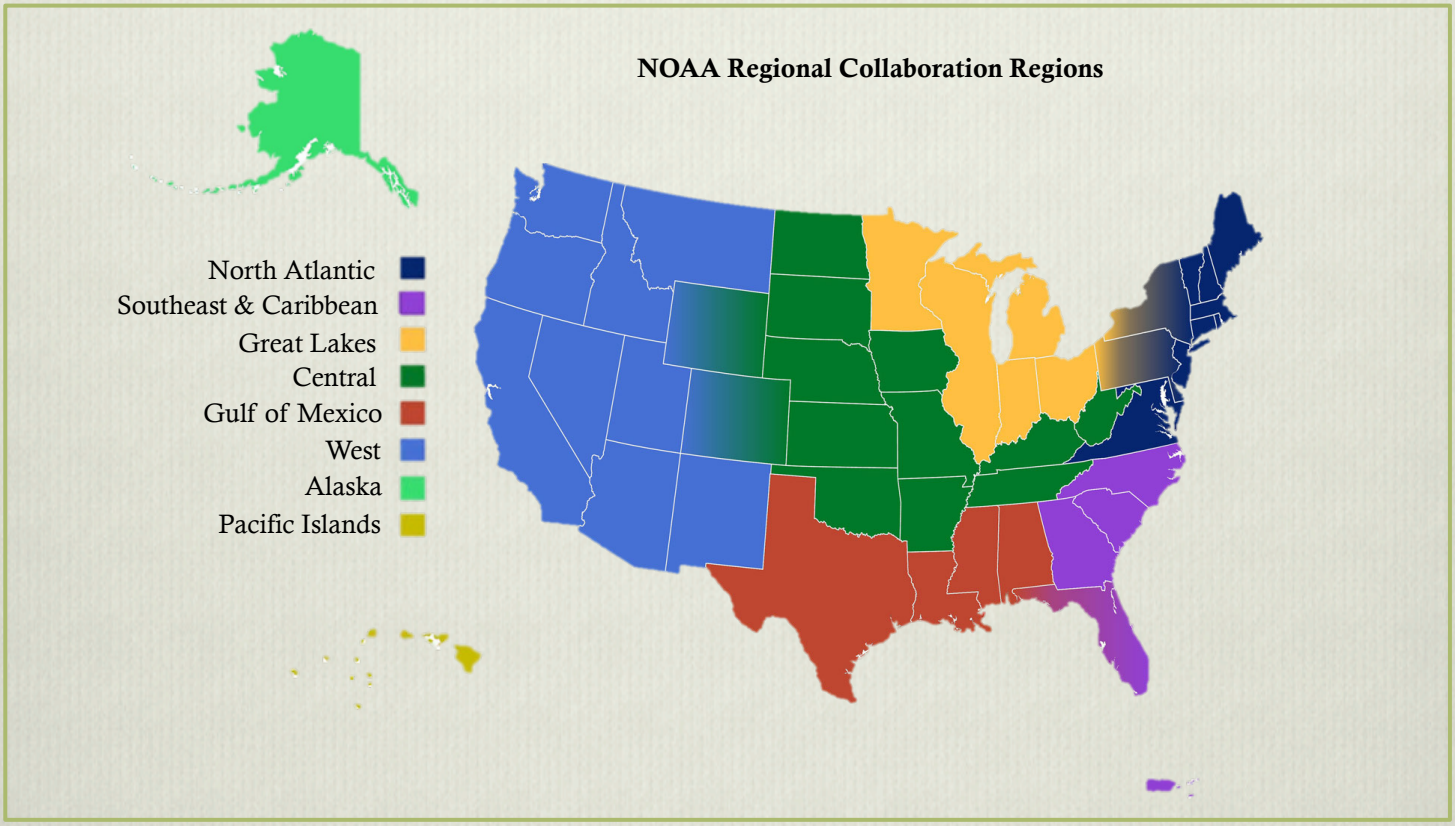
Irma Lagomarsino
West Coast Regional Office Fisheries

Kris Wall
Office for Coastal Management

Dr. Kevin Werner
Regional Climate Services Director
National Centers for Environmental Information

Regional Collaboration Background

NOAA's Regional Collaboration effort is a network of NOAA employees and partners representing the agency's diverse capabilities across the country. Eight geographic regions are represented by Regional Collaboration Teams, comprised of members representing line office mission interests and capabilities. The teams are led by senior level Regional Team Leads and full-time Regional Coordinators. At the national level, the effort is supported and overseen by the NOAA Executive Panel, and an Advisory Group consisting of headquarters-level Line Office leadership.



NOAA has many partners with many needs, and demands for NOAA services are growing. The effective implementation of NOAA's mission requires consideration of variability in the natural environment and also regionally specific attributes of the citizenry, and the places in which they live.

Many of the complex challenges that drive NOAA mission are place based, and require interdisciplinary approaches and regionally tailored solutions. The Regional Collaboration network addresses regional challenges by engaging and connecting people and resources within the regions and with headquarters, in ways that are rich in regional insight and that inform action. Through this work, NOAA's Regional Collaboration effort improves the understanding of, and respect for NOAA's broad mission and regional capabilities. Our vision of a unified and regional integrated NOAA is focused on service to the nation by meeting the evolving demands of regional stakeholders.

NOAA Western Regional Collaboration Team (NOAA West)

NOAA West Regional Footprint

NOAA West team members reflect the diversity of NOAA's presence in the region, and is comprised of subject matter experts from all five NOAA business lines, and two partner organizations - Sea Grant, and the Western Regional Climate Center. Team members are located in offices across the region.

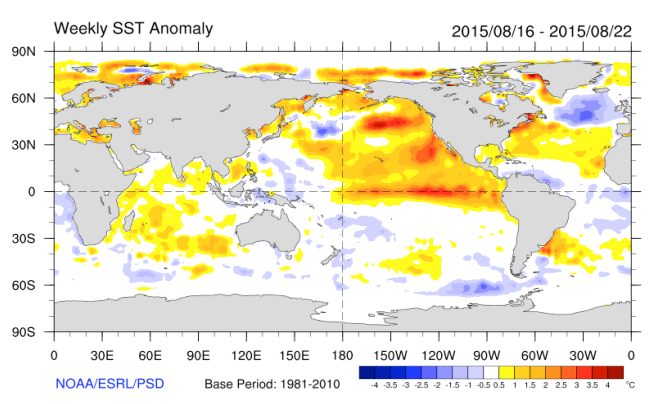
Within the broader regional collaboration framework and strategy, NOAA West focuses its efforts on "unifying issues" – that is, well-documented regional priorities that are best addressed by a coordinated cross-NOAA response, and on issues that the NOAA West team can add unique value.

The team also focuses considerable effort on developing strategic partnerships that result in improved understanding of NOAA mission and regional capabilities, and that improve the visibility and value of NOAA to policy makers and the public. This report highlights the work and accomplishments of the NOAA Western Region Collaboration Team (NOAA West) for Fiscal Year 2015.

There are many examples of effective collaboration in the region that are not led by NOAA West, but that are supported through the leadership and participation of NOAA West team members. Over the last year, NOAA West team members were involved in high visibility and high impact collaborations including the California Drought Service Assessment; the regional implementation of National Ocean Policy, including the establishment of the Regional Planning Body, West Coast Data Portal, and evolution of the West Coast Ocean Partnership; work to support the National Integrated Drought Information System Drought Early Warning Systems; and ongoing efforts to implement the Russian River Habitat Blueprint in California, and habitat conservation collaborations in the Pacific Northwest. Although this report does not describe these collaborations, it is worthy to note the engagement and collaborative spirit of NOAA West team members as they work to expertly implement NOAA's mission in the region.

NOAA West Fiscal Year 2015 Formulation

As part of the formulation process, the team identified a number of high visibility, high impact regional issues, including drought, flooding and water resources; wildfires; changing ocean chemistry, protected species conservation and recovery, and the Pacific Anomaly and emerging El Niño.



The Pacific Anomaly, or "Warm Blob", and emergent El Niño. NOAA/ESRL/PSD

California is in the fourth year of drought
Robyn Beck/AFP/Getty Images

During deliberation, the team realized that the common thread across these issues is changing climate conditions. Every NOAA mission line is involved in "climate" work, but at different points along the research to management applications continuum.

Impacts from changing ocean chemistry remains a priority regional issue. NOAA/NMFS

Wildfires in Twisp, Wash., Aug. 20, 2015
Erika Schultz/The Seattle Times via AP

Ultimately the discussion focused on how the team could work, in close coordination with the Regional Climate Services Director and in-region partner network, to advance climate services in the region to better address some of these chronic or emerging issues. Improving foundational knowledge of regional climate services surfaced as the top team priority for Fiscal Year 2015.

Regional Collaboration Goal: Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources

Regional Climate Services Landscape Survey
NOAA West Investment: $43,000.
Supplemental Funds: $10,000 from NESDIS, NWS, NMFS, NOS & OAR

Background: The regional landscape of climate issues, interested parties, partners and stakeholders is complex, and growing more complex. Little information is available on the provision and use of regional climate services within the region, and there is no systematic understanding of gaps in information needs, or overlap in service delivery.

This year the team kicked off a project that aims to develop a relational database tool capable of generating a regional landscape report of climate services within the western region for the purposes of characterizing and understanding who is providing and utilizing climate services within the region at federal, state, tribal and local levels. Climate services are defined as scientifically based information and products that enhance users' knowledge and understanding about the impacts of climate on their decisions and actions (AMS policy statement).

The goal of the project is to inform NOAA and our partner network of the current landscape of climate service provision and use in the region across specific sectors. This information will help inform NOAA climate service engagement and help identify gaps and areas of overlap.

CIRES
Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences

Western Water Assessment

CLIMAS
Climate Assessment for the Southwest
A NOAA RISA TEAM

Regional Climate Centers

DRI
Desert Research Institute

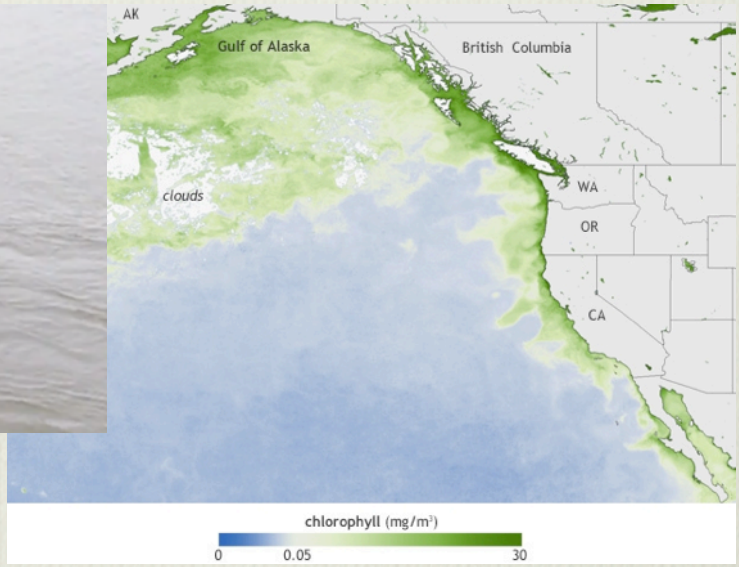
The climate services landscape project is implemented through the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, the Western Water Assessment RISA, and the Climate Assessment for the Southwest RISA. The tool will operationally reside with the Western Regional Climate Center where it will be annually updated and broadly available.

Regional Collaboration Goal: Address regional challenges by connecting people and resources

West Coast Harmful Algal Bloom Response
NOAA West Investment: $500.

Background: One of the goals of establishing NOAA Regional Teams is to improve the agency's flexibility to respond to emerging or unanticipated regional issues. During the spring and summer of 2015, the entire West Coast experienced a Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) event that was unprecedented in its extent and magnitude.

California sea lion seizing from domoic acid poisoning in May 2015. Credit: Dan Ayres/Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Average chlorophyll concentrations in July 2015. Darkest green have highest surface concentrations. NOAA Climate.gov map.

The domoic acid bloom extended from California northward to Vancouver Island. In the outer coast of Washington, sea lions were observed seizing from the ingest of toxic shellfish. In Washington, State officials banned razor clamming and closed Dungeness crab harvesting. Officials in California warned people not to eat mussels, clams, anchovies and sardines; and in Oregon, officials shut down shellfish harvesting from the Columbia River south to Tillamook Head and banned razor clamming across the state.

Research analyst, Anthony Odell, studying the toxic algae bloom in the Pacific Ocean aboard the Bell M. Shimada. (NOAA)

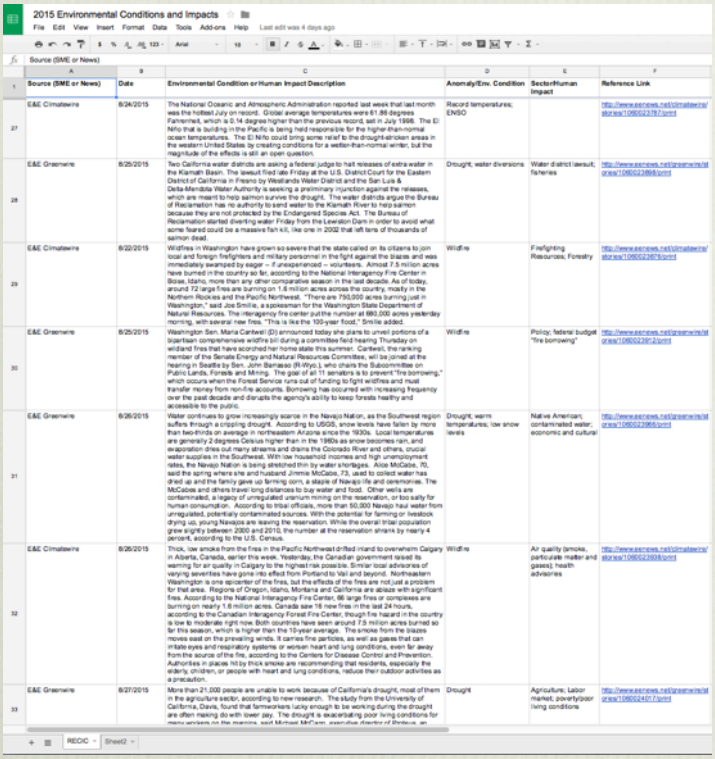
Scientists suspected a link to the anomalous warm water conditions in the Eastern Pacific, and a NOAA Fisheries science team sought to "piggy back" on a scheduled fisheries survey on the Bell M. Shimada in order to sample the West Coast wide HAB event. The fisheries scientists had no funding to mobilize and urgently requested the help of NOAA West. The team provided a modest amount of funding in a timely way in order to facilitate the rapid deployment of the science team.

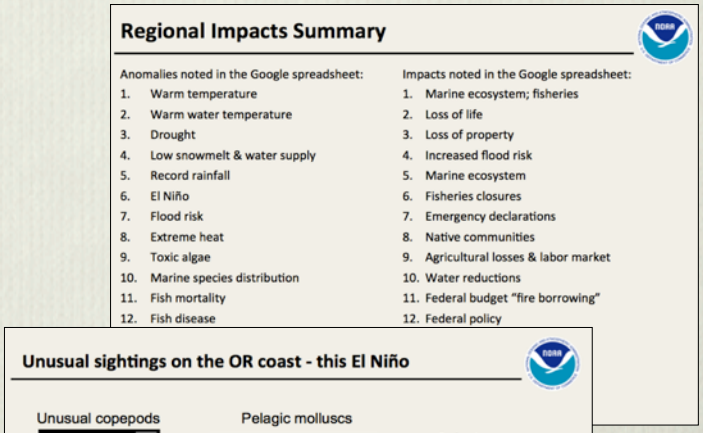
Regional Collaboration Goal: Exchange both national and regional insights that inform action

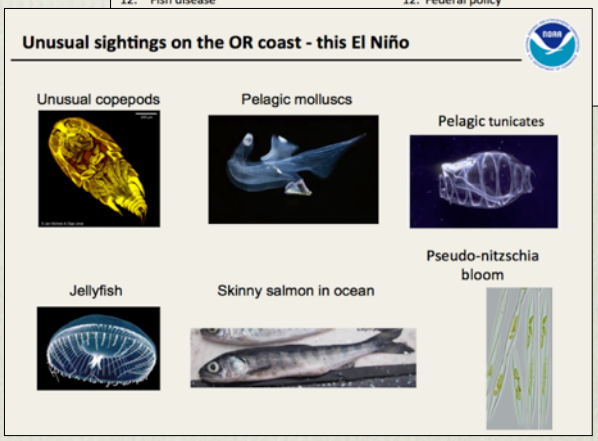
Regional Environmental Conditions and Impacts Coordination

NOAA West Investment: Staff time

Background: In recognition of growing regional impacts from changing climate conditions – from the Pacific Anomaly also known as "The Blob", to the strengthening El Niño – the team developed a strategy and implementation plan to collect and document regional environmental conditions and impacts to human systems and NOAA mission. There is a significant amount of useful information on changing environmental conditions, but a gap in the compilation and synthesis of impacts at seasonal timescales.







Through this work, the team intends to:

1. Document and share information on environmental observations and reported human system and NOAA mission impacts

2. Improve coordination, communication and internal awareness of environmental conditions and human system impacts across NOAA mission lines and our extensive partner network; and

3. Improve external communication of changing conditions and impacts, including but not limited to El Niño, and tailor communications to elected officials.

The effort will conclude in Spring 2016, with a retrospective conditions report and human systems and NOAA mission impacts summary. The effort will be evaluated for its utility in coordinating and summarizing information during future climate related events.

Regional Collaboration Goal: Improve the understanding of and respect for NOAA's mission and regional capabilities

Leadership Engagement
NOAA West Investment: Staff time

Background: The team is often called on to develop in-region engagement for NOAA leadership that highlights regional issues and needs, and articulates compelling stories of NOAA's regional cross mission capacity and partnerships. Working with the Program Coordination Office, the team scopes, plans and executes engagements that highlight leadership priorities as exemplified in the region.

This work provides valuable insights to leadership that help them convey messages on how NOAA delivers service to the nation.

Team members are also often called to help develop leadership opinion pieces for regional media outlets, utilizing their knowledge of regional issues and politics, as well as their extensive in-region partnership networks.

NWS, NOS, NMFS and OMAO representatives at the Port of Seattle as part of an engagement of the Maritime Sector.

Dr. Sullivan viewing native oyster hatchery operations NOAA Manchester Research Station

Timi Vann, NOAA West Regional Coordinator interviews VADM Devany as part of an interactive NOAA All Hands

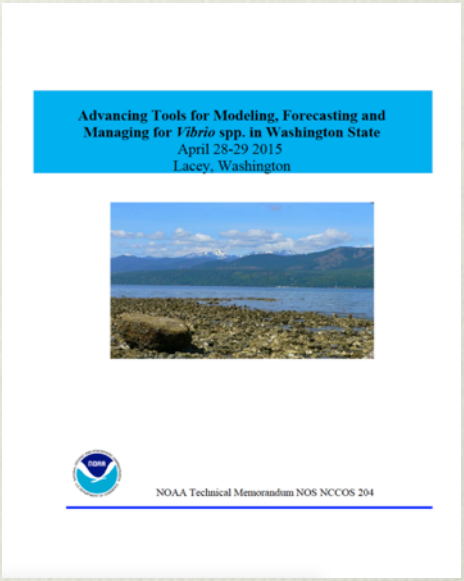
In Fiscal Year 2015, NOAA West provided this service to the NOAA Administrator, the Deputy Under Secretary for Operations, and the Chief of Staff, Office of Communications on an average of one engagement per quarter.

NOAA West Regional Team Administration

The NOAA West Regional Coordinator, sponsored by the National Weather Service, is the only full-time employee dedicated to NOAA West activities. The Regional Coordinator is responsible for coordinating collaborative team activities, and providing expert administration of team business, including team meetings, budget oversight, and reporting requirements. In addition, the NOAA West Regional Coordinator provides policy analysis and communication to a broad segment of NOAA in the region, and tailored corporate customer service to support NOAA mission at Headquarters and in the region. Highlights for 2015 include:

- Led the collaborative development of the Regional Collaboration Network Strategy Map 2015-2020, and delivered the Regional Collaboration Network overview presentation to the NOAA Executive Panel.

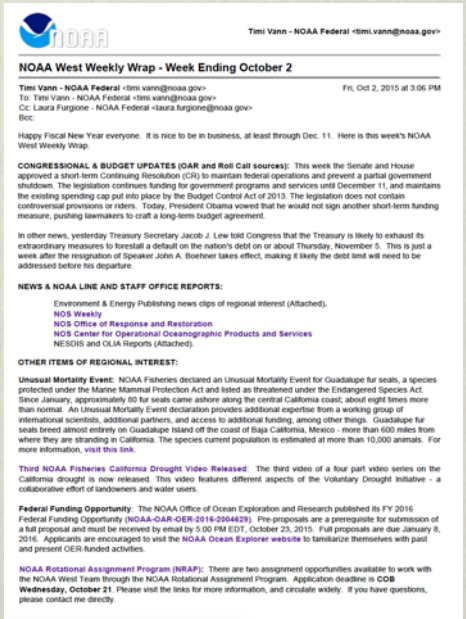
- Formulated the approach for the *Advancing Tools for Modeling, Forecasting and Managing for Vibrio spp. in Washington State* workshop, and facilitated the exchange of technical information on data, models, and decision support tools. Results from this work are published in NOAA Technical Memorandum NOS NCCOS 204.


Advancing Tools for Modeling, Forecasting and Managing for *Vibrio* spp. in Washington State
April 28-29 2015
Lacey, Washington

NOAA Technical Memorandum NOS NCCOS 204

- Provided NOAA field leadership for the Department of State, Foreign Press Centers, Press Tour on "Environmental Protection of Oceans and Fishing". Implemented cross-NOAA subject matter expert briefings for 14 foreign press. According to the U.S. Department of State, "*the resulting stories allowed us to get important messages to, literally, millions of people*."

- Issued 44 "NOAA West Weekly Wraps", an aggregation and synthesis of regionally relevant information, to regional stakeholders.


Timi Vann - NOAA Federal <timi.vann@noaa.gov>

NOAA West Weekly Wrap - Week Ending October 2

Timi Vann - NOAA Federal <timi.vann@noaa.gov> Fri, Oct 2, 2015 at 3:06 PM
To: Timi Vann - NOAA Federal <timi.vann@noaa.gov>
Cc: Laura Furgione - NOAA Federal <laura.furgione@noaa.gov>
Bcc:

Happy Fiscal New Year everyone. It is nice to be in business, at least through Dec. 11. Here is this week's NOAA West Weekly Wrap.

CONGRESSIONAL & BUDGET UPDATES (OAR and Roll Call sources): This week the Senate and House approved a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) to maintain federal operations and prevent a partial government shutdown. The legislation continues funding for government programs and services until December 11, and maintains the existing spending cap put into place by the Budget Control Act of 2013. The legislation does not contain controversial provisions or riders. Today, President Obama vowed that he would not sign another short-term funding measure, pushing lawmakers to craft a long-term budget agreement.

In other news, yesterday Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew told Congress that the Treasury is likely to exhaust its extraordinary measures to forestall a default on the nation's debt on or about Thursday, November 5. This is just a week after the resignation of Speaker John A. Boehner takes effect, making it likely the debt limit will need to be addressed before his departure.

NEWS & NOAA LINE AND STAFF OFFICE REPORTS:

Environment & Energy Publishing news clips of regional interest (Attached).
NOS Weekly
NOS Office of Response and Restoration
NOS Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services
NESDIS and OLIA Reports (Attached).

OTHER ITEMS OF REGIONAL INTEREST:

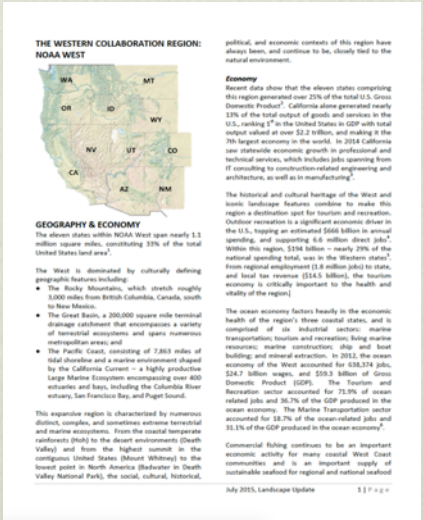
Unusual Mortality Event: NOAA Fisheries declared an Unusual Mortality Event for Guadalupe fur seals, a species protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Since January, approximately 80 fur seals came ashore along the central California coast; about eight times more than normal. An Unusual Mortality Event declaration provides additional expertise from a working group of international scientists, additional partners, and access to additional funding, among other things. Guadalupe fur seals breed almost entirely on Guadalupe Island off the coast of Baja California, Mexico - more than 600 miles from where they are stranding in California. The species current population is estimated at more than 10,000 animals. For more information, visit this link.

Third NOAA Fisheries California Drought Video Released: The third video of a four part video series on the California drought is now released. This video features different aspects of the Voluntary Drought Initiative - a collaborative effort of landowners and water users.

Federal Funding Opportunity: The NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research published its FY 2016 Federal Funding Opportunity (NOAA-OAR-OER-2016-2004629). Pre-proposals are a prerequisite for submission of a full proposal and must be received by email by 5:00 PM EDT, October 23, 2015. Full proposals are due January 8, 2016. Applicants are encouraged to visit the NOAA Ocean Explorer website to familiarize themselves with past and present OER-funded activities.

NOAA Rotational Assignment Program (NRAP): There are two assignment opportunities available to work with the NOAA West Team through the NOAA Rotational Assignment Program. Application deadline is **COB Wednesday, October 21**. Please visit the links for more information, and circulate widely. If you have questions, please contact me directly.

- Led the development of the 2015 NOAA West Regional Landscape document – a descriptive analysis of the region, high visibility issues, regional partnerships, and NOAA mission drivers.


THE WESTERN COLLABORATION REGION: NOAA WEST

GEOGRAPHY & ECONOMY

Economy

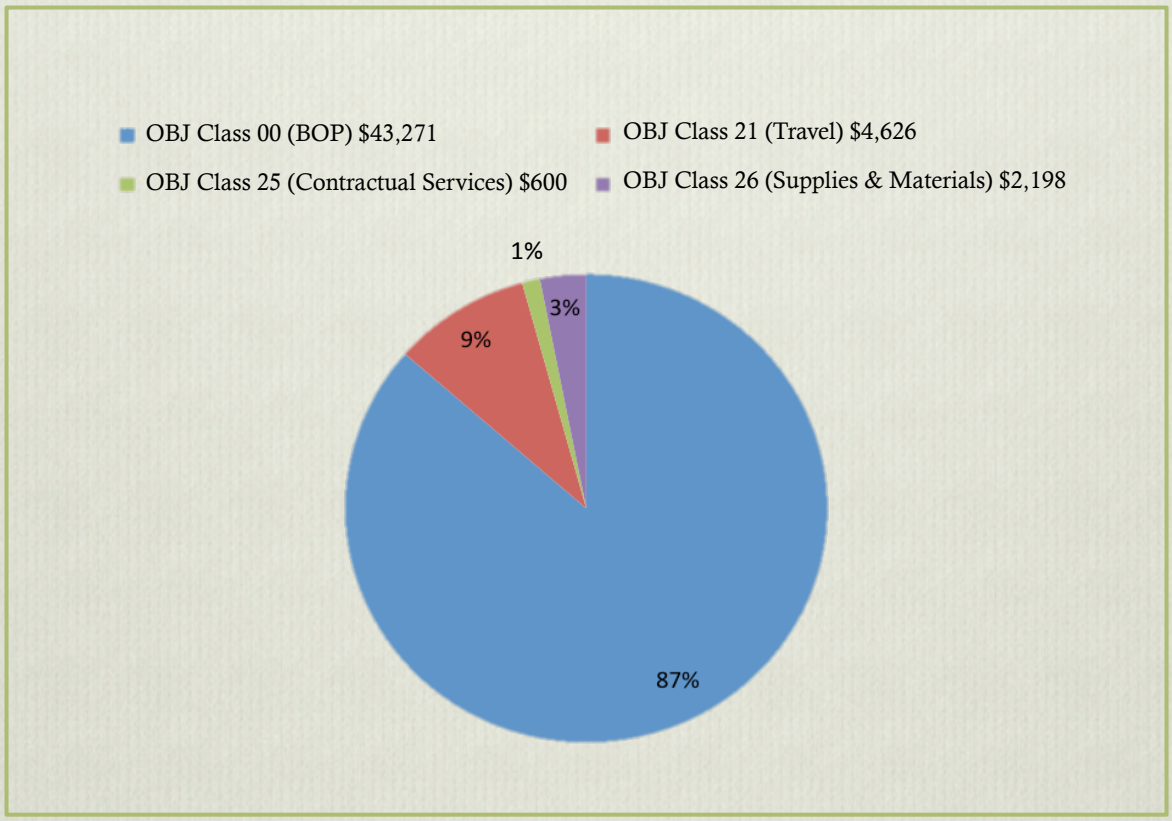
July 2015, Landscape Update 1 | Page

NOAA West Fiscal Year 2015 Expenditure Report

Background: Each regional team is resourced through funding that is pooled across five of six line offices. These offices contribute $80,000 apiece to the effort, and that $400,000 is divided between the eight teams, with each team receiving an annual $50,000 allocation. A full-time regional coordinator, funded by a line office sponsor, administers the teams. The NOAA West Regional Coordinator is sponsored by the National Weather Service.

The NOAA West $50,000 allocation for Fiscal Year 2015 is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. **FY15 Expenditure Report**



As the chart indicates, the majority of team funds (87%) were invested in the Regional Climate Services Landscape project. Smaller expenses were reported for travel (9%), supplies and materials (3%) and contractual services (1%).